

Dialogue best way to resolve religious issues: Najib
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Dialogue is the best way to resolve sensitive racial and religious issues, said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

He said, however, the dialogues must hinge on sincerity that manifested from maturity to achieve understanding and create harmony among races and religions in the country.

"In the context of relationship among religions, if such dialogues are supported and mediated by respected religious leaders, it will produce multiple positive impacts for the people," he said when opening the 54th National Quran Reciters Assembly in Kuching tonight.

Also present was Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud. Twenty-nine qari (male Quran reciters) and qariah (female Quran reciter) are due to take part in the assembly themed "1Malaysia 1Ummah" at the Dewan Majlis Islam Sarawak.

"Suffice to say, the price of peace is very high," said Najib (right), adding that the government was continuously monitoring religious sensitivities so as to prevent irresponsible quarters from sowing religious discord.

Deep wisdom

On the theme "1Malaysia 1Ummah", he said it brought a deep wisdom and fulfilled the needs of the people and Muslims.

He said the social contract, historical background and the federal constitution should be capitalised as the framework to guide the people in building a progressive and harmonious 1Malaysia, which culminated in a great 1Ummah.

"Under this scenario, promoting racial tolerance and acceptance among various races, namely the Malays, Chinese, Indians, Melanau, Iban, Kadazan-Dusun, Bidayuh, Bajau, Senoi and more than other 200 ethnic communities should continuously be empowered," said the prime minister.

He said the fact that Malaysia was a unique plural society should be defended just like Prophet Muhammad did in Medina using two elements of unity - among fellow Muslims and with non-Muslims.

"Do not just because you are irritated by a mosquito, you burn the mosquito net (Malay proverb). And do not just because of disputes over trivial issues, we choose to forsake the peace that we enjoy today," he said.

He said in order to maintain the prosperity and welfare of the people, which was the foundation of the government's struggle, a holistic socio-economic transformation in terms of governance had been introduced.

The government would not neglect the Islamic development agenda in its strive to turn Malaysia into a high-income country by 2020, he added.

He said the government acknowledged the role played by the religious community in the march towards Vision 2020, which was proven by raising the allowances of Kafa teachers, takmir teachers and imams to elevate them from the poverty line starting this year.

On the assembly, he said it was a symbol of the government's ongoing commitment to uphold the Al-Quran.

"It is such an important annual event, it will definitely bring continuous impact to the 1Ummah strength, likewise hosting the yearly international Al-Quran recital assembly," he added.

- Bernama

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